



Los Angeles County DJJ Transition Team

March 25, 2021

Youth Justice Reimagined

AGN NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND
SHEILA KUEHL

August 13, 2019

Restructuring the Juvenile Justice System: Building a Health-Focused Model

Well-regarded research on adolescent brain development, positive youth development and trauma have demonstrated the ways youth are physiologically and fundamentally different from adults and require different interventions. Acknowledgement of these differences has resulted in the understanding that punitive models of juvenile justice not only result in worsened outcomes, which runs counter to the rehabilitative goals of the juvenile justice system, but also fail to make communities safer. Systems centered on healing and growth are essential for improving the well-being of young people.

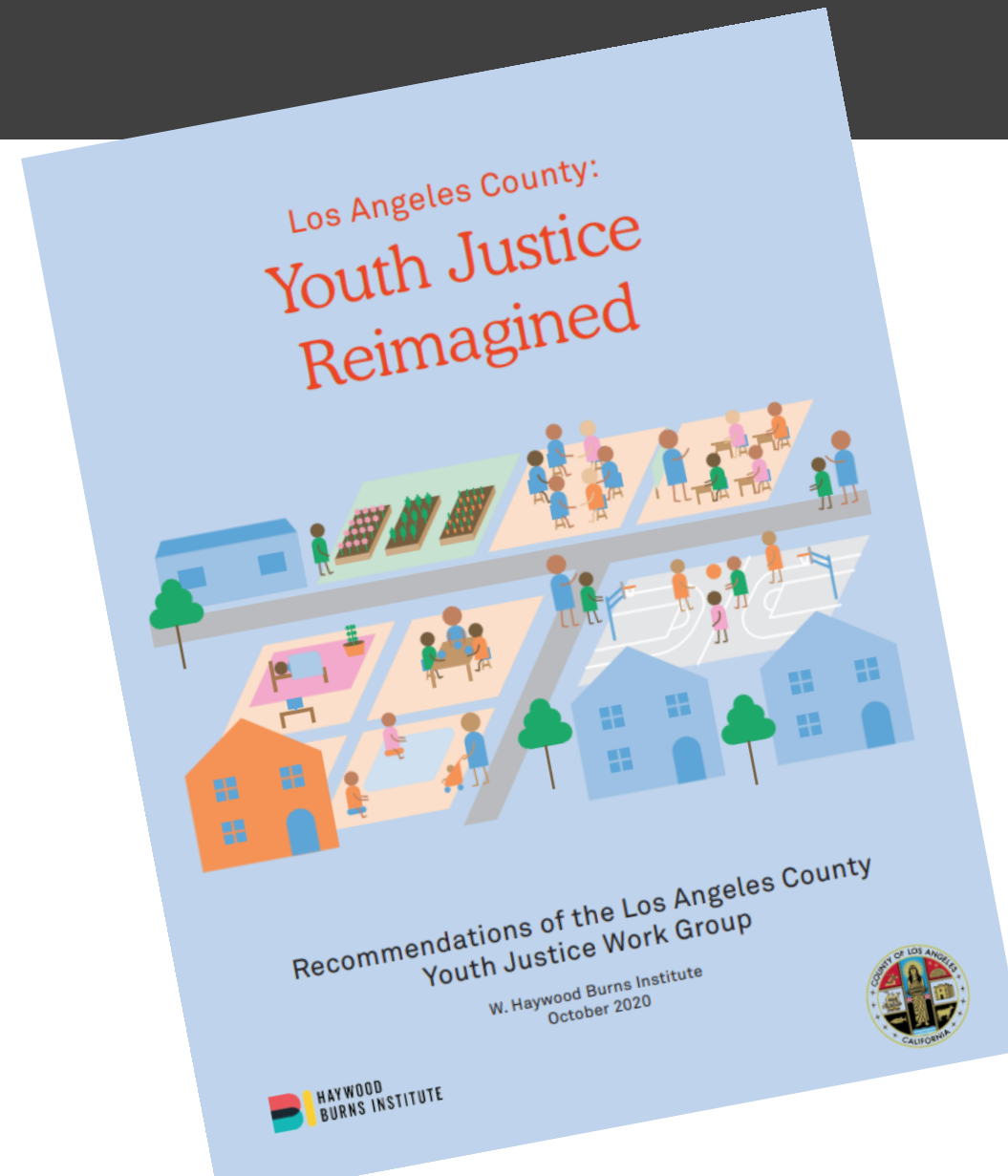
Over the past decade, many counties have attempted to reform what had become, at their core, overly punitive juvenile justice systems; Los Angeles County (County) is among them. While local reform efforts have resulted in some improvements, including reductions in incarceration, fewer low-risk youth on probation, and greater investments in diversion, the County has so far struggled to achieve major improvements in the treatment of youth in its care and custody. This year, rampant use of pepper spray has put into question youth safety, and the significant mental health needs of youth – 90% of youth in the juvenile halls have an open mental health case – puts into question whether a system of incarceration is even appropriate. If the County is to meet its obligation of adequately addressing the rehabilitative needs of the youth in its care, it must acknowledge that the juvenile camps and halls model is fundamentally flawed, and that housing supervision and services within an agency with a law enforcement orientation may be counterproductive. Shifting towards a rehabilitative, care-first

MOTION

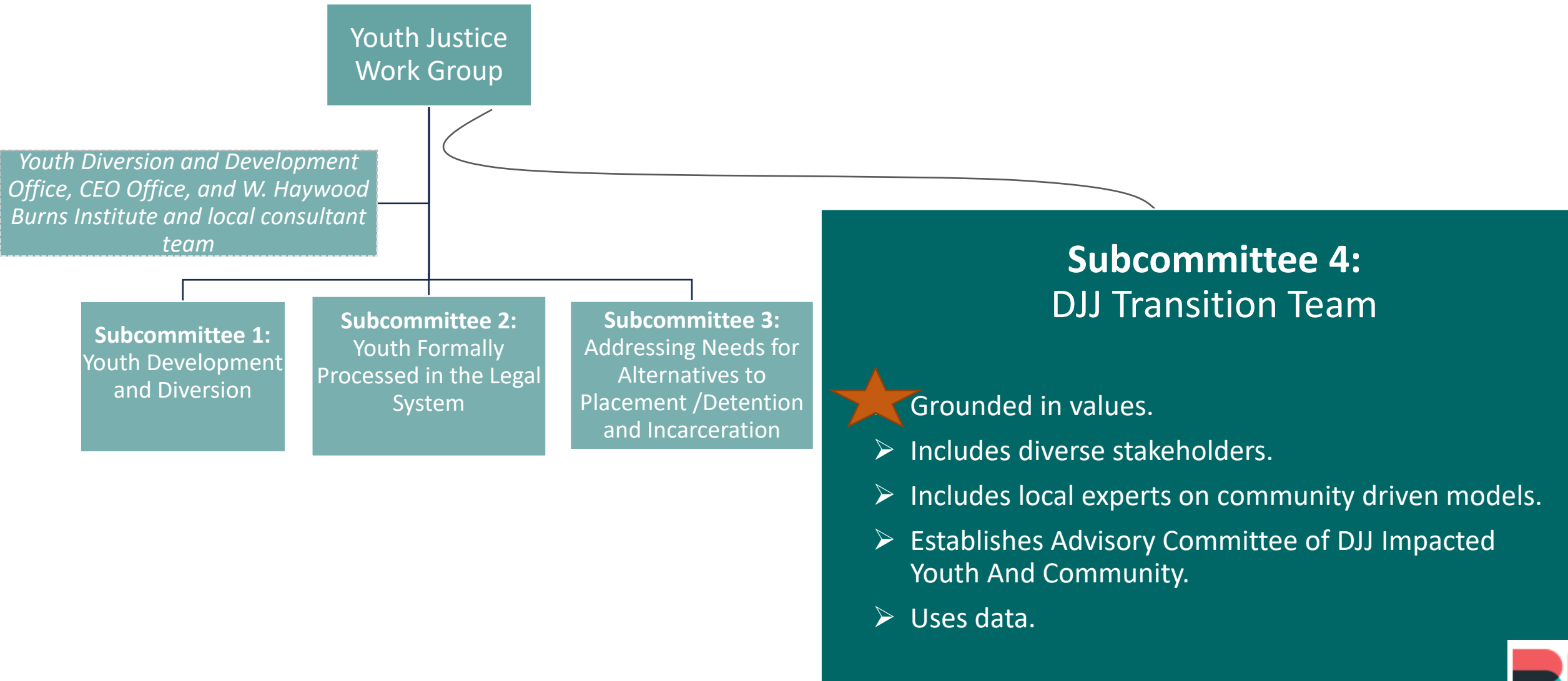
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| Solis | _____ |
| Ridley-Thomas | _____ |
| Kuehl | _____ |
| Barger | _____ |
| Hahn | _____ |

“Explore the **transitioning of the Los Angeles County’s juvenile justice system out of the Probation Department into another agency**, with the goal of creating a rehabilitative, health-focused, and care-first system [that is] meaningfully different in operations and outcomes from the current system.”

– Motion by Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Sheila Kuehl, August 13, 2019



DJJ Transition Team

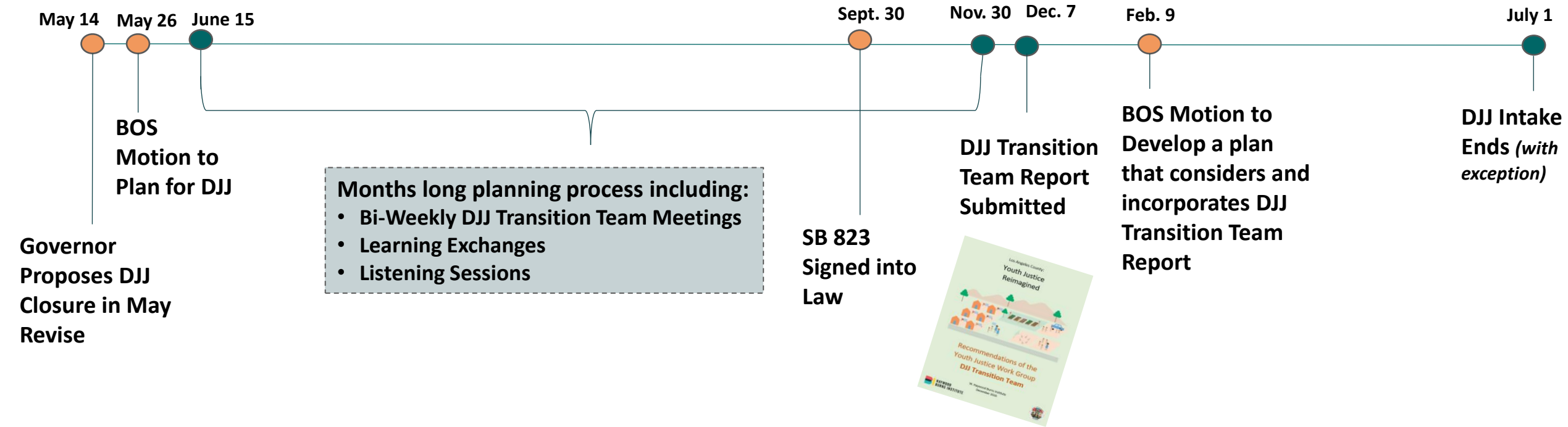


Rooting Work in Core Values

1. Youth should be addressed through a holistic, trauma-informed approach. Responses to youth should focus on rehabilitation, healing, enhancing public safety and restorative justice.
2. Youth's family and community should be active participants in their healing.
3. Any form of out-of-home placement should promote healing in a therapeutic environment. Youth should not be warehoused in punitive, institutionalized settings.
4. Comprehensive educational and vocational opportunities should be provided.
5. Voices of victims and survivors should be heard, and perspectives considered.
6. Facility staffing should prioritize backgrounds in social work, healing, restorative and transformative justice.
7. Justice system should make intentional investment in CBOs rooted in directly impacted neighborhoods to provide support services for youth in and out of custody.
8. Reentry support with connection to the community is critical and should begin right away.
9. A model focused on punishment and retribution will undermine the progress achieved thus far in LA County.



DJJ Transition Team Timeline



DJJ Transition Team Participants

- Probation
- Defense Counsel
- District Attorney
- Justice System Impacted Youth
- Service Providers
- Mental Health
- County Office of Education
- Judge
- Community based organizations
- Community Leaders
- Crime Survivor Advocates
- County Counsel
- County Executives Office
- Youth Development and Diversion

SB 823

- **Intake Closure Date: July 2021**
 - **Except**→ Court may commit a young person who is otherwise eligible and in whose case a motion for transfer was filed. (new W.I.C. §736.5(a)). County cost for these commitments is \$125,000 per year (amended W.I.C. 912(c)).
- **Age of Jurisdiction (amends W.I.C. §607)**
 - Age 23 if youth adjudicated of offense in WIC 707(b)
 - Age 25 if youth adjudicated of offense in WIC 707(b) and offense would face 7+ year sentence in adult court.
- **Intent for new dispositional track (W.I.C. §736.5)**
 - Intent language for creation of dispositional track for “Higher-Need” youth by March 1, 2021 that considers prior drafts.

Note that prior legislative drafts included language that:
 - Limits youth who may be committed to this track and to a “Secure Youth Treatment Facility” only when court enters a finding on the record that a less restrictive alternative is not suitable and after when court considers several factors.
 - Designates Judicial Council to develop a matrix of offense-based classifications to be applied to determine a baseline confinement term.
 - Includes progress review hearings with the court not less frequently than every six months.
- **Commitment Time: (amends W.I.C. 730)**
 - Maximum commitment time is “middle term” of imprisonment that could be imposed for same offense in adult court.

SB 823

- **Funding: Block Grant to County (new W.I.C. §1900)**

- 2021-22: \$39.95 Mil; 2022-23: \$118Mil; 2023-24: \$192 Mil; 2024-25: \$208.8 Mil.
- Formula: By County allocation based on
 - 30% ADP at DJJ;
 - 50% youth adjudicated for violent felony offenses according to DOJ data;
 - 20% based on county youth population, ages 10-17).
- Plan for use of funds must be developed by a multi-agency juvenile justice coordinating council (new W.I.C. §1995(a), referencing existing W.I.C. §749.22). JJCC Subcommittee will include number of named system stakeholders and a **minimum** of 3 community representatives.
- Plan must be approved by new Office of Youth and Community Corrections to ensure it contains all necessary elements. First plan due January 1, 2022.

Estimate for LA County:

- FY 2021-22 → \$8.2 M
- FY 2022-23 → \$24.6 M
- FY 2023-24 → \$40.7 M

- **Funding: Regional Youth Programs and Facilities Grant Program (New W.I.C. . §2250)**

- One-time grants totaling \$9,600,000

- **Office of Youth and Community Restoration**

- New Department within Health and Human Services (“HHS”) with a mission to: “to promote trauma responsive, culturally informed services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system that support the youths’ successful transition into adulthood and help them become responsible, thriving and engaged members of their communities.”

Source: FY 2021-22; 2022-23 LA County Probation Presentation to CAC (March 2021); FY 2023-24 Governor Fact Sheet on SB 823 (October 2020)

See pages 6-8 of DJJ Transition Team Report



DJJ Youth Advisory Board Perspective

Perspective on Failures of DJJ:

1. **Large size.**
2. **Unsupportive staff and staff culture.**
3. **Lack of mentorship inside.**
4. **Dehumanizing procedures.**
5. **Programming that doesn't work**
6. **Disconnection and distance.**
7. **Lack of trust.**
8. **Lack of hope and opportunity.**
9. **Lack of safety and violence.**
10. **Lack of fairness in accountability.**
11. **Lack of consistency.**

Perspective on Ideal Components for a DJJ Alternative

1. **Supportive, relatable staff**, especially those with lived experience similar to the youth
2. **Campus-like environment** with teachers, counselors, mentors on site throughout the weekdays
3. **Education, skills and vocational programs, opportunities and equipment** (books, laptops, internet, etc.) that expose youth to new learning and ways of thinking
4. **Fair rules applied to all youth** that avoid favoritism
5. **Access to community and relationship-building** off-site and through CBOs
6. **A positive incentive-based system**, especially the opportunity to step-down from more restrictive to less restrictive housing.
7. **Dignity and privacy.** For instance, bedrooms that have basic amenities like a good bed and allow for some privacy and individuality.
8. **Security through a sense of safety.** While programming, youth feel safe with their peers and staff; there is security overall in the environment.

Source: LA Youth Justice Work Group, DJJ Youth Advisory Board

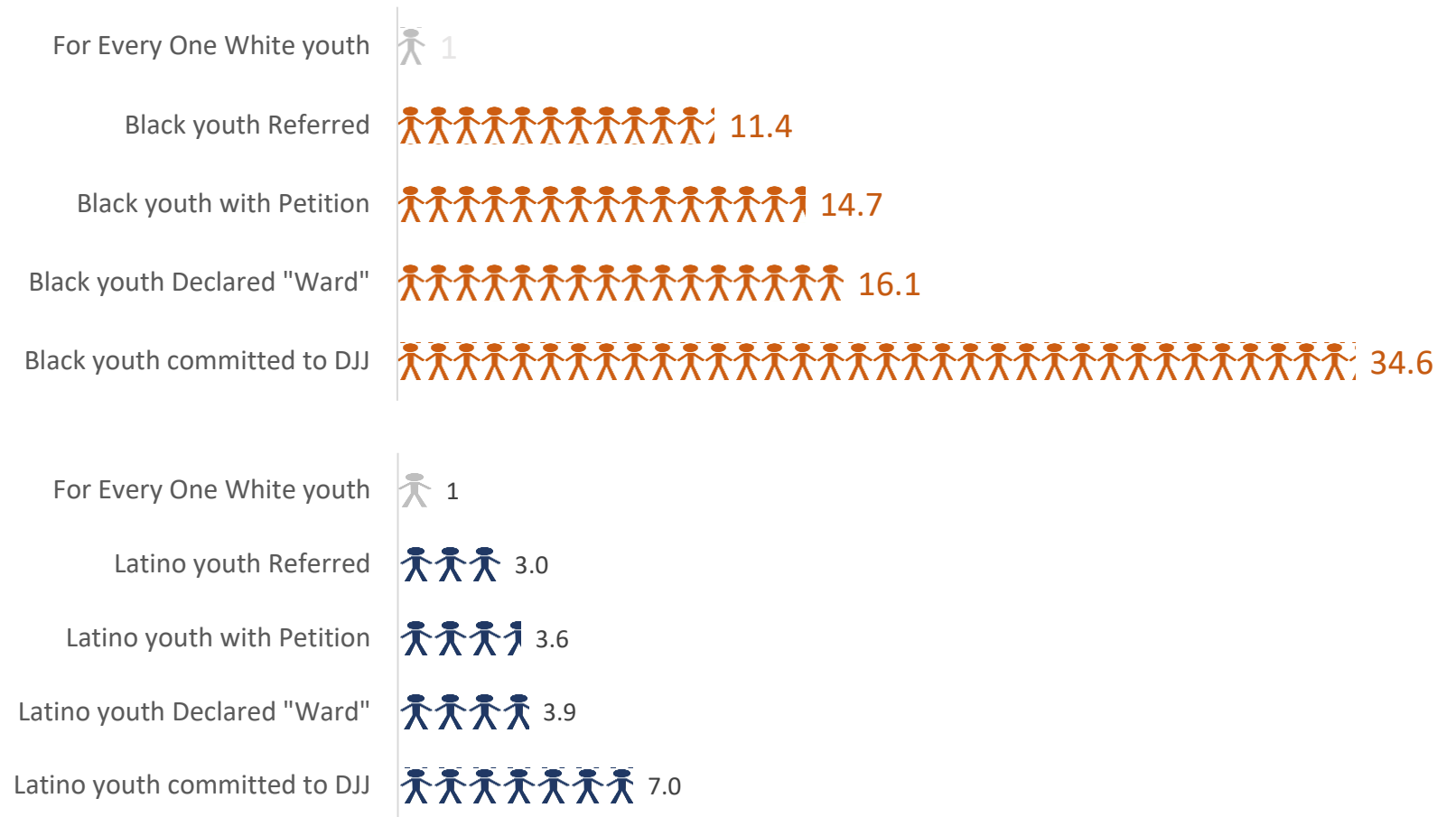
See pages 11-14 of DJJ Transition Team Report



Cumulative Disadvantage for Black and Latino Youth (most recent **five years** combined)

Youth of color are over-represented at *every stage* of the juvenile justice process.

This leads to **cumulative disadvantage**, increasing with deeper involvement in the justice system.

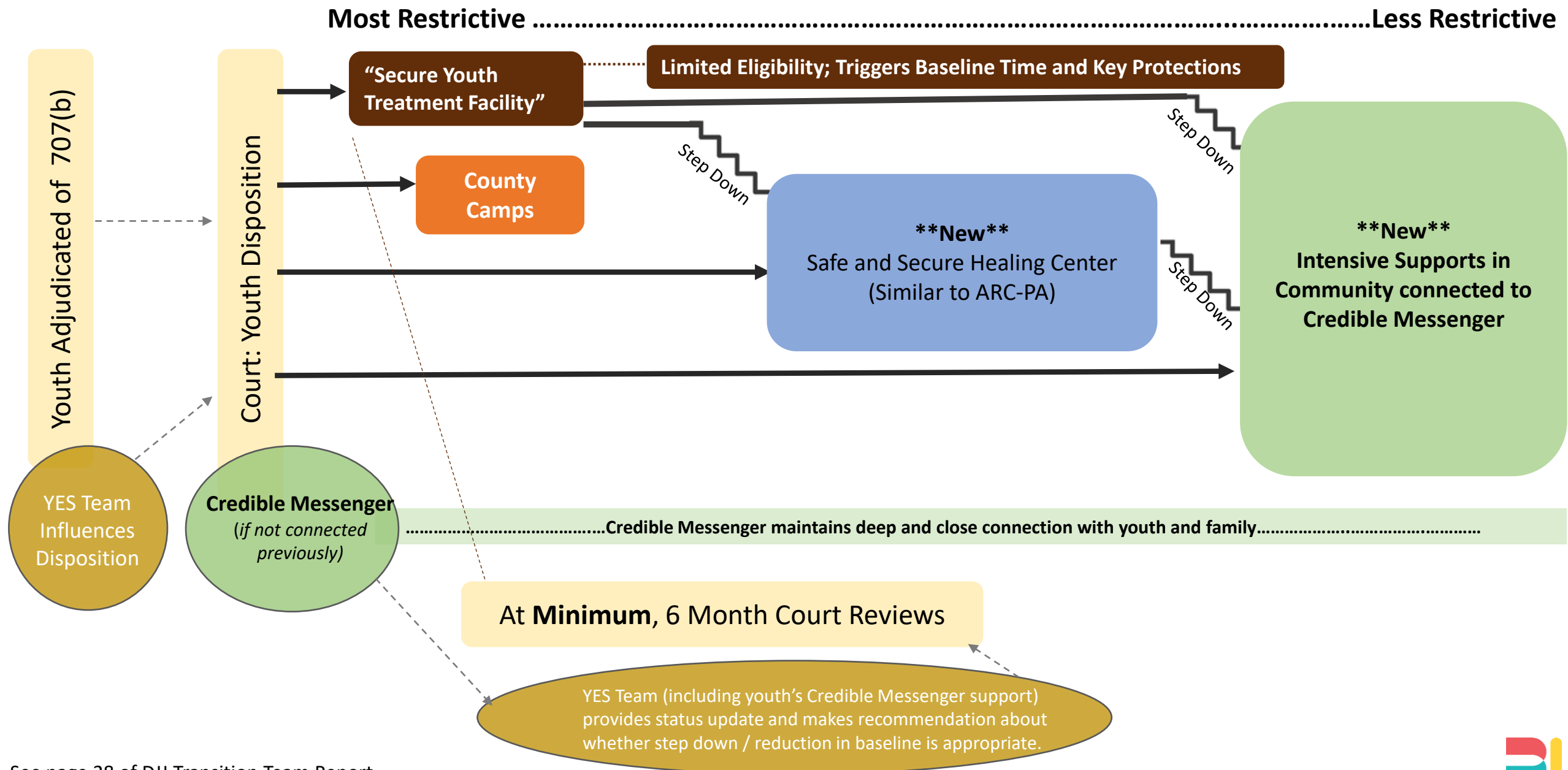


Source: Referral, Petition, Wardship Data: California Department of Justice (DOJ); DJJ data: Los Angeles County Probation Department

See pages 16-21 of DJJ Report for additional data.



LA County Disposition Decision Making -Secure Youth Treatment Facility



Secure Youth Treatment Facility:

Limited Eligibility

And Triggers Baseline Time and Legal Protections

1

Designation of Secure Youth Treatment Facility

2

Eligibility

3

Criteria for
Judicial
Determination

4

Individualized
Rehabilitation
Plan

5

Baseline
Confinement
Term

6

Six Month
Review Hearings

Facility Attributes

| Facility | Facility Attributes | | | | | Other Considerations | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---|
| | "Security" | Capacity for Vocational and Educational Training | Therapeutic Environment | Not Prison-like | Vast, Outdoor, green spaces | Benefits as DJJ Alt. | Concerns for use as DJJ Alt. | Renovations needed to align facility with core values |
| The Compound (Barry J. Nidorf) | | | | | | | | |
| Traditional "Camps" | | | | | | | | |
| Dorothy Kirby | | | | | | | | |
| Campus Kilpatrick | | | | | | | | |
| Gonzales | | | | | | | | |
| STRTP | | | | | | | | |
| New Small Home-like Model- (ARC) | | | | | | | | |

For each facility, the DJJ Transition Team discussed how the facility attributes aligned or deviated from core values.

The DJJ Transition Team concluded that:

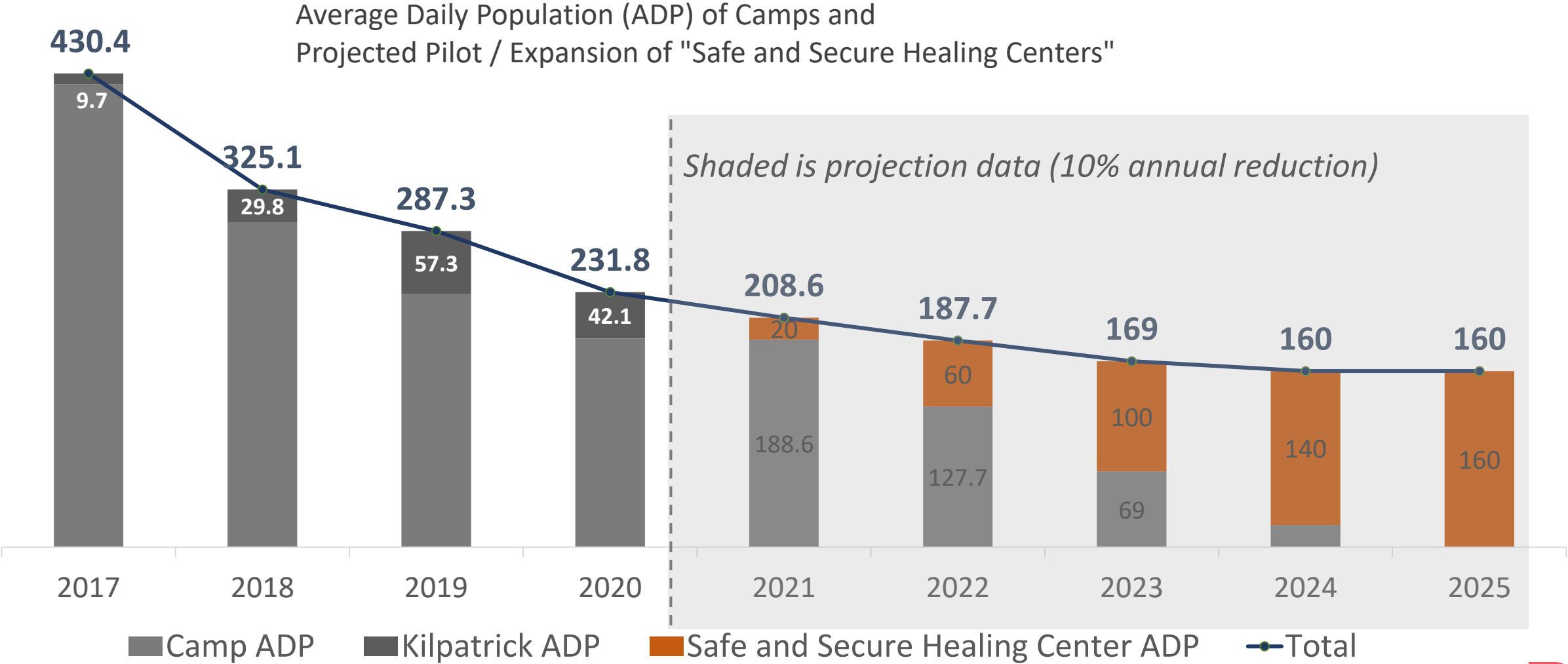
- Facility at "The Compound" at Barry J Nidorf were fundamentally in contrast with the core values.*
- The facilities with the most promise included Campus Kilpatrick, Camp Gonzales and Dorothy Kirby.*

Phasing of DJJ Alternative and Safe and Secure Healing

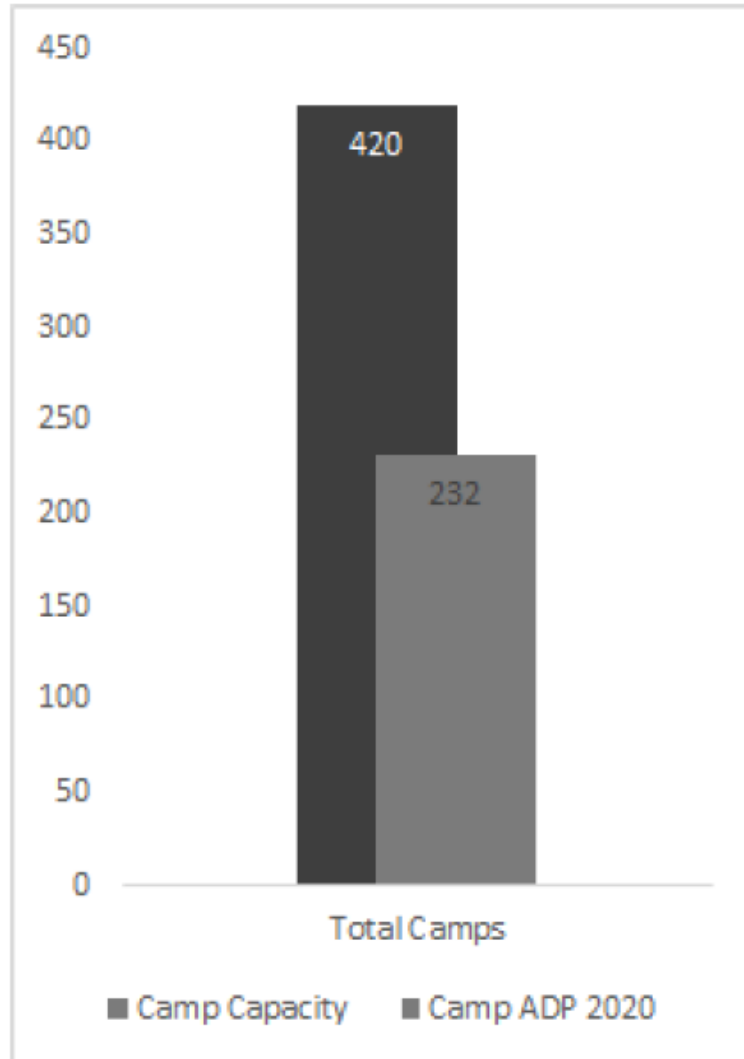
| | Planning: Current – July 2021 (intake ends with exception) | July 2021- July 2022 | July 2022 – July 2023 | July 2023 – July 2024 <i>(Estimated County Allocation \$40.7 Million)</i> |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Alternative to DJJ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning for DJJ Alternative Facility 1 (Kilpatrick) - Assess and adopt physical, programming and staffing improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin Using Facility 1 (Kilpatrick) Planning for Facility 2 (Camp Gonzales, if needed) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DJJ Alternatives operational | |
| Safe and Secure Healing Centers (SSHC) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning for Pilot (<i>reducing need for camp</i>) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Pilot (<i>e.g. 4 SSHCs to serve as post-disposition alternatives (+/- 40 youth)</i>) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of SSHCs (<i>e.g. 15 - 20 Safe and Secure Healing Centers to serve as post-disposition alternatives (+/- 150-200 youth)</i>) | |
| Camp | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First cohort of youth placed/moved to SSHCs Collect data for ongoing program evaluation Close camps where possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close additional camps as SSHCs grow. | |



Continued Reduction of Camp Commitments and Shift to Safe and Secure Healing Centers



Average Daily Population (ADP) of Camps and Camp Capacity (2020)



Reductions in the number of youth committed to Camps signals the County's commitment to decarceration strategies overall and reinforce the viability of a movement to continue to close Camps and shift to Safe and Secure Healing Centers.

